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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/997,571	11/29/2001	James L. Volpe	109.0016	5258

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EXAMINER

DESHPANDE, KALYAN K

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3623

DATE MAILED: 03/08/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/997,571

Applicant(s)

VOLPE ET AL.

Examiner

Kalyan K. Deshpande

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 November 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

1. The following is a non-final office action in response to the communications received on November 29, 2001. Claims 1-20 are now pending in this application.

Claim Objections

The numbering of claims is not in accordance with 37 CFR 1.126 which requires the original numbering of the claims to be preserved throughout the prosecution. When claims are canceled, the remaining claims must not be renumbered. When new claims are presented, they must be numbered consecutively beginning with the number next following the highest numbered claims previously presented (whether entered or not).

Misnumbered claims 18 and 19 have been renumbered claims 18, 19, and 20. Two separate claims were numbered claim 18, therefore one of the claims remains claim 18 and the following claim 18 has been numbered 19. Original claim 19 has been renumbered to claim 20.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-9, 15, and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anglin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5862322) in view of Moldenhauer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6901397).

Art Unit: 3623

As per claim 1, Anglin teaches:

A system for managing a business organization's customer-related communications, comprising:

at least one originator terminal for receiving from an originator a submission containing a customer information and an identified business issue (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The originator terminal is any end user who is not a customer, per the specification. Here, the product vendor is an end user who qualifies as an originator terminal. The request information includes customer information and a business issue.);

a central server computer connected to the originator terminal for storing the submission in a database accessible by the central server computer, for assigning an owner to the submission based upon the submission category, customer information, and identified business issue, and for automatically notifying the owner of the assignment (see column 34 lines 11-20; where the request is stored in a database.);

at least one owner terminal connected to the central server computer for providing access to the submission stored in the database, and for documenting a response to the submission by updating the submission (see column 34 lines 11-52; where a product administrator of vendor personnel can modify and update the requests.).

Art Unit: 3623

Anglin fails to explicitly teach a submission containing a "submission category". Anglin does teach the submission including information regarding identifying information, including the end user's name, identifier, telephone number, software application name, the nature of the product request, the product name, the type of product request, and a short description of the error (see column 33 lines 10-38). The type of product request is the same as the submission category. A user inserts in to the product request field the same information as used for a submission category, and therefore are functionally the same. The advantage of including a submission category or a type of request category is that it facilitates organizing the information such that the appropriate personnel can address the requests. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, for one of ordinary skill in the art to use the type of product request field in the Anglin system for submission categories in order to have the appropriate personnel respond to the request, which is a goal of Anglin (see column 1 lines 52-67).

As per claim 2, Anglin teaches:

The system of claim 1, wherein the system further includes: at least one FYI assigner terminal connected to the central server computer for providing access to the submission stored in the database to an FYI assigner automatically designated by the central server computer based on the submission category, customer information, and identified business issue, and for documenting a response to the submission by updating the submission (see column 34 lines 11-52; where customer service and the product administrator can update requests with any information. This can include FYI information.).

Art Unit: 3623

As per claim 3, Anglin teaches:

The system of claim 1, wherein the central server computer further includes: a customer complaint resolution process software module run by the central server computer for handling a response to a submission containing a customer complaint (see column 32 lines 1-24, column 33 lines 10-38, and column 34 lines 11-52; where the system includes a software module, the "Smartstream Assistant", to resolve customer requests. A customer request is the same as a customer complaint.).

As per claim 4, Anglin teaches:

The system of claim 1, wherein the system exports data to a quality management software module run by the central server computer for generating reports based upon submissions stored in the database (see column 30 lines 4-9; where the system is capable of generating reports.).

As per claim 5, Anglin fails to teach a website administered by the central server computer for receiving a submission from an originator terminal, and for receiving a submission update from an owner terminal. Moldenhaur teaches a website administered by the central server computer for receiving a submission from an originator terminal, and for receiving a submission update from an owner terminal (see column 5 lines 42-67 and figure 4; where a website is used as an interface for end users to submit issues to customer service representatives). The advantage of using a website to receive customer submissions is that it allows a dynamic interface for collecting customer and issue information. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, for one of ordinary skill in the art to administer a website for receiving end

Art Unit: 3623

user submissions in order to provide a dynamic interface for collecting customer and issue information, which is a goal of Moldenhaur (see column 1 lines 31-50).

As per claim 6, Anglin teaches:

The system of claim 1, further including a customer terminal connected to the central server computer for receiving a submission directly from a customer (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The customer can submit issues through the product administrator or directly.).

As per claim 7, Anglin teaches:

A system for managing a business organization's customer-related communications, comprising:

at least one owner terminal connected to the central server computer (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The originator terminal is any end user who is not a customer, per the specification. Here, the product vendor is an end user who qualifies as an originator terminal. The request information includes customer information and a business issue.); and

a database accessible by the central server computer (see column 34 lines 11-20; where the request is stored in a database.),

the central server computer automatically storing the submission in the database, the website further including an update submission information that is displayed at an owner terminal for updating a submission stored in the central database to document a response to a submission (see column 34 lines 11-20; where the request is stored in a database.).

Anglin fails to explicitly teach a website administered by a central server computer; at least one originator terminal connected to the central server computer and the website including an add submission web page displayed at an originator terminal for receiving a submission containing customer-related information, the submission including a designated category selected from a set of categories including response-required submissions, FYI submissions, and customer complaint submissions. Moldenhauer teaches a website administered by a central server computer; at least one originator terminal connected to the central server computer (see column 5 lines 42-67 and figure 4; where a website is used as an interface for end users to submit issues to customer service representatives) and the website including an add submission web page displayed at an originator terminal for receiving a submission containing customer-related information, the submission including a designated category selected from a set of categories including response-required submissions, FYI submissions, and customer complaint submissions (see figures 5a, 5b, 5c, and 6a; where the user has the ability to submit information from a webpage to the system.). These limitations are addressed by the rejection of claims 1 and 5; therefore the same rejection applies here.

As per claim 8, Anglin teaches:

Art Unit: 3623

The system of claim 7, further enabling searching submissions stored in the database and displaying search results (see column 33 lines 56-67 and column 34 lines 11-52; where the user can search through previously submitted requests.).

Anglin fails to teach including a web page. This limitation is taught by Moldenhauer as recited in the rejection of claims 1 and 5; therefore the same rejection applies here.

As per claim 9, Anglin teaches:

The system of claim 7, further including an external customer submission information that is displayed at an external customer terminal, the external customer submission information being used by an external customer to make a submission directly into the system (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The customer can submit issues through the product administrator or directly.).

Anglin fails to teach including a web page. This limitation is taught by Moldenhauer as recited in the rejection of claims 1 and 5; therefore the same rejection applies here.

As per claim 10, Anglin teaches:

A method for managing a business organization's customer-related communications, comprising:

(a) using a central server computer to administer a network (see column 32 lines 14-24; where the system includes computers for the customer, product

Art Unit: 3623

administrator, and vendor customer service. Any of these machines can be servers.);

(b) receiving at an originator terminal connected into the network a submission containing customer-related information, a response required submission including an assignment of the submission to an owner (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The originator terminal is any end user who is not a customer, per the specification. Here, the product vendor is an end user who qualifies as an originator terminal. The request information includes customer information and a business issue. The owner of the issue is initially the product administrator and can be further assigned to the vendor customer service if necessary.),

(c) transmitting a response-required submission to the central server computer (see column 32 lines 14-24 and column 33 lines 10-21; where the end user submits a request.);

(d) storing the response-required submission in a database accessible by the central server computer (see column 34 lines 11-20; where the request is stored in a database.);

(e) automatically notifying the assigned owner of the response required submission (see column 33 lines 56-67; where once the request has been created it is sent to the product administrator. Sending the request to the administrator is the same as notifying the administrator.);

(f) developing a response to the response-required submission (see column 33 lines 56-67; where the administrator attempts to the respond to the request. If the administrator is unable to respond to the request, he may forward the request to the vendor's customer service.);

(g) documenting the response to the response-required submission by using an owner terminal connected to the central server computer to access and update the response-required submission (see column 34 lines 11-52; where a product administrator of vendor personnel can modify and update the requests.); and

(h) storing the updated response-required submission in the database (see column 34 lines 11-52; where the updated and modified requests based on the response is stored in the database.).

Anglin fails to teach "the submission including a designation of a category of the submission, the designated category being selected from a set of categories including response required submissions". This limitation is already addressed by the rejection of claim 1; therefore the same rejection applies here.

As per claim 11, Anglin teaches:

The method of claim 10, wherein step (e) includes providing the owner with a workflow queue of requests to be worked on by the owner (see column 7 lines 33-59; where requests are listed in an administrator's "activities" list.).

As per claim 12, Anglin teaches:

Art Unit: 3623

The method of claim 10, wherein the set of categories includes FYI submissions, an FYI submission including a designation of an assigner, and wherein the method further includes:

receiving an FYI submission at the originator terminal (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The originator terminal is any end user who is not a customer, per the specification. Here, the product vendor is an end user who qualifies as an originator terminal. The request information includes customer information and a business issue. The owner of the issue is initially the product administrator and can be further assigned to the vendor customer service if necessary. The request can be of any nature, including just informational. An FYI submission is a submission that is informational in nature per the Specification.);

storing the FYI submission in the database (see column 34 lines 11-20; where the request is stored in a database.);

automatically notifying the designated assigner of the FYI submission (see column 33 lines 56-67; where once the request has been created it is sent to the product administrator. Sending the request to the administrator is the same as notifying the administrator.);

documenting a response to the FYI submission by using the owner terminal to access and update the FYI submission (see column 34 lines 11-52; where a product administrator of vendor personnel can modify and update the requests.);

storing the updated FYI submission the database (see column 34 lines 11-52; where the updated and modified requests based on the response is stored in the database.).

As per claim 13, Anglin teaches:

The method of claim 10, wherein the set of categories includes customer complaint submissions, and wherein the method further includes: automatically invoking a customer complaint resolution process to handles the customer complaint (see column 32 lines 1-24, column 33 lines 10-38, and column 34 lines 11-52; where the system includes a software module, the "Smartstream Assistant", to resolve customer requests. A customer request is the same as a customer complaint.).

As per claim 14, Anglin teaches:

The method of claim 10, further including: generating quality management reports based upon submissions stored in the database (see column 30 lines 4-9; where the system is capable of generating reports.).

As per claim 15, Anglin fails to teach step (a) includes using the central server computer to administer a website, and wherein steps (b) and (g) include gaining access to the website. Moldenhauer teaches this limitation as recited in the rejection of claim 5; therefore the same rejection applies here.

As per claim 16, Anglin teaches:

The method of claim 10, further including: receiving an external customer submission directly from an external customer terminal connected to the central server computer; automatically storing the external customer submission in the

Art Unit: 3623

database; and notifying a VOC owner of the submission (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, column 33 lines 56-67, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The customer can submit issues through the product administrator or directly. Once the request has been created it is sent to the product administrator. Sending the request to the administrator is the same as notifying the administrator.).

As per claim 17, Anglin fails to teach automatically sending a response to the customer by e-mail after the VOC owner has developed a response and entered it into the system. It is old and well-known in the art to automatically notify a customer of a response to a request via email. The advantage of automatically notifying a customer of a response to a request via email is that it facilitates the efficiency of the system by reducing the amount of time required. It would have been obvious, to one of ordinary skill in the art, to automatically notify a customer of a response to a request via email in order to reducing the amount of time required and increase the efficiency of the system, which is a goal of Anglin (see column 1 lines 63-67 and column 2 lines 1-6).

As per claim 18, Anglin teaches:

A method for managing a business organization's customer-related communications, comprising:

(c) receiving at the add submission information a submission containing customer-related information, the submission including a designated category selected from a set of categories including response-required submissions, FYI

Art Unit: 3623

submissions, and customer complaint submissions (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The originator terminal is any end user who is not a customer, per the specification. Here, the product vendor is an end user who qualifies as an originator terminal. The request information includes customer information and a business issue. The owner of the issue is initially the product administrator and can be further assigned to the vendor customer service if necessary.),

(d) automatically storing the submission in the database (see column 34 lines 11-20; where the request is stored in a database.),

(e) displaying an update submission information at an owner terminal connected to the central server computer (see column 34 lines 11-52; where a product administrator of vendor personnel can modify and update the requests. The updated submissions can be searched or sorted and are displayed in a list.);

(f) documenting a response to a submission by using the update submission information to access and update a submission stored in the database (see column 34 lines 11-52; where a product administrator of vendor personnel can modify and update the requests.); and

(g) storing the updated submissions in the database (see column 34 lines 11-52; where the updated and modified requests based on the response is stored in the database.).

Anglin fails to teach (a) administering a website from a central server computer, (b) displaying an add submission web page at an originator terminal connected to the center server computer, and a "submission web page". These limitations are taught by Moldenhauer recited in the rejection of claims 1 and 5; therefore the same rejection applies here.

As per claim 19, Anglin teaches:

The method of claim 17, further including: displaying at a terminal connected to the central server computer a search submissions information for search submissions stored in the database and displaying search results (see column 33 lines 56-67 and column 34 lines 11-52; where the user can search through previously submitted requests.).

Anglin fails to teach including a web page. This limitation is taught by Moldenhauer as recited in the rejection of claims 1 and 5; therefore the same rejection applies here.

As per claim 20, Anglin teaches:

The method of claim 17, further including: displaying an external customer submission information at an external customer terminal connected to the central server computer; using the external customer submission information to receive a submission directly from a customer (see column 32 lines 14-24, column 33 lines 10-21, and figure 41; where a system including an end user, product administrator, and vendor customer support personnel is described. The customer can submit issues through the product administrator or directly.).

Anglin fails to teach including a web page. This limitation is taught by Moldenhauer as recited in the rejection of claims 1 and 5; therefore the same rejection applies here.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The following are pertinent to the current invention, though not relied upon:

Fawcett et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5678002) teach an automated system and method for diagnosing and resolving computer-related problems from a product support center.

Lee (U.S. Patent No. 6542897) teaches a customer support system provides a customer support service with respect to a consumer product using an Internet.

Storch et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5920846) teach an integrated system and method is provided for processing a service request for installation, maintenance or repair of a local loop maintained by a telecommunications company and providing locally switched service to a customer premise.

Galdes et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6177932) teach a method and apparatus for a network based customer service.

Caruso et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5848271) teach a new computerized information flow technology is provided where information in an organization may be logically and automatically routed through a predefined sequence of activities to users who need the information.

Piccoli et al. (Piccoli, Gabriele; Spalding, Bonnie R.; Ives, Blake; "The Customer-Service Life Cycle: A Framework for Improving Customer Service through Information Technology"; *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, June 2001, pp. 38-45) teaches a method of developing internet strategy to meet customer service demands.

El Sawy et al. (El Sawy, Omar A.; Bowles, Gene; "Redesigning the Customer Support Process for the Electronic Company: Insights from Storage Dimensions", *MIS Quarterly*, December 1997, pp. 457-483) teaches methods for redesigning IT-enabled customer support.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kalyan K. Deshpande whose telephone number is (571) 272-5880. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

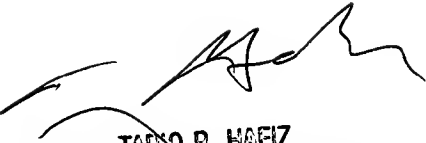
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Application/Control Number: 09/997,571
Art Unit: 3623

Page 18

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